



Interview Summary: Andrew Maisonville

Andrew Maisonville was interviewed by John Mather and Allison McMahon on October 6, 2022. Questions about this interview summary should be directed to Ms. McMahon.

Text contained in [square brackets] are explanatory notes provided by Commission Counsel to assist the reader.

In reviewing this summary, Mr. Maisonville provided additional details about his background and the events discussed during his interview. Those details have been incorporated into the summary.

Background

Mr. Maisonville resides in Windsor, Ontario. On February 11-13, 2022, he attended the protests that occurred near the Ambassador Bridge port of entry (“**POE**”).

Mr. Maisonville described himself as a 37-year-old, indigenous (Blackfoot First Nation), African Canadian father of two. He explained that his son has been diagnosed with a debilitating medical condition, which requires his continuous care and attention.

Views on COVID-19

Mr. Maisonville expressed the view that COVID-related public health measures are a threat to freedom. He explained that he could not give informed consent to the COVID vaccine because he had questions about it that were never answered. Vaccination policies affected his children, as they were unable to go certain places and join certain sports. As well, Mr. Maisonville indicated that he was unable to visit his father while he was in the hospital due to COVID policies.

Mr. Maisonville said that, prior to February 2022, he had never attended a COVID-related protest. However, he would speak out about freedom, which included liking or otherwise agreeing with posts on Facebook concerning the public health response to COVID.

Attendance at the Ambassador Bridge Protests

Mr. Maisonville explained that between February 10-13, 2022, protesters gathered at College St. and Huron Church Road. [The intersection of College St. and Huron Church Road is immediately adjacent to the Ambassador Bridge port of entry (“**POE**”) entrance.] Mr. Maisonville said that he was aware of this protest because he lives nearby, and it caused a big commotion.



Friday, February 11, 2022

Mr. Maisonville first attended the protest on Friday, February 11. He explained that a convoy of trucks was parked in the southbound lane of Huron Church Avenue near College Avenue, but that the protesters left a lane open for emergencies. However, he noted that the police had blocked off the intersection entirely.

According to Mr. Maisonville, the police did not make any effort to move the protesters that night. He felt that the police were generally kind; as an example, he said that one officer offered to bring Tim Hortons for the protesters.

Saturday, February 12, 2022

Mr. Maisonville stated that on Saturday, February 12, he awoke to messages saying that the police were making their move on the protesters. He explained that he walked toward the protest but was stopped by OPP officers near the fire station [on College Avenue, approximately 200 meters east of Huron Church Avenue]. From that position, he saw police moving the protesters back.

Sunday, February 13, 2022

Mr. Maisonville said that he went back to Huron Church Avenue and College Avenue on the morning of Sunday, February 13. Police were scattered along the street, and some were in city buses to stay warm. Police barricades were blocking the whole street.

According to Mr. Maisonville, a line of police started moving south along Huron Church Avenue at approximately 8 a.m. They told protesters, "Leave now if you do not want to be arrested". Mr. Maisonville was recording a live video on Facebook at the time. He said that in the video, he made it clear that he wanted to leave, both because he had his father's truck and because he did not want to be arrested.

Mr. Maisonville said that the line of police drove the main group of protesters south down Huron Church Avenue. As protesters started leaving, another group of police moved north up Huron Church Avenue and began arresting the protesters, including Mr. Maisonville.

Mr. Maisonville called the arrest simple and said that he was treated with care by the arresting officers. The officers took him by the arms and sat him on the median for about 45 seconds. He was then moved to a prisoner transport vehicle and placed in handcuffs, which he described as fairly loose. He recalled that most of the police were friendly to him; some officers were smiling and making jokes. To him, it seemed like the officers did not want to be arresting protesters, but knew they had to.



Mr. Maisonville stated that as he was being arrested, he saw an old man carrying a sign who was being taken down by the police. He said that he did not see what happened, because he was also being taken down at that time. He subsequently saw that the man's face was injured.

Mr. Maisonville was charged with mischief over \$5,000 and disobeying a court order. The court order that Mr. Maisonville allegedly breached is the injunction [issued on February 11, which prohibits anyone with notice of the order from "impeding or blocking access to the Ambassador Bridge and indirect or direct approaching roadways and access points"]. Mr. Maisonville stated that he was not aware of the injunction at the time of the arrest. He explained that, on the evening of February 11, he heard that the police were issuing papers to people on Friday night. He never saw those papers.

Impact of Arrest

Mr. Maisonville stated that he is a life coach who works with troubled youth and that he is currently trying to get two businesses off the ground. He is concerned that the charges he faces will impact his ability to remain employed as he works with troubled youth. He explained that his concerns, as a sole provider, extend to his ability to provide for his family, including the unique and extensive care required by his disabled son.

Mr. Maisonville stated that, due to geographical restrictions imposed by a Police Undertaking, he was unable to exercise his right to vote during the 2022 provincial election.

Media Coverage of the Protest

Mr. Maisonville explained that he does not identify as a protester. During the protests, he did not carry a sign to the protest or vocalize his views. He stated that his purpose in attending was to record videos of the demonstration, because he felt that the media was not telling the truth about what was happening and that he had an obligation to do so.

Mr. Maisonville noted on Friday, February 11, the media reported that protesters were blocking the bridge. Mr. Maisonville felt that this was inaccurate. Although the convoy stopped in the road, they did not completely block it. According to Mr. Maisonville, the police that closed the intersection. As well, the media continued to report that protesters were blocking the bridge even after they were cleared from the intersection of Huron Church Avenue and College Avenue on Saturday morning. Mr. Maisonville expressed the view that the bridge could have reopened, with traffic being diverted down College Avenue, and that it was the police who chose to keep the bridge closed.



Organization Amongst Protesters

Mr. Maisonville did not see any organization or leadership amongst the protesters. He felt that there were undercover officers amongst the protesters. He observed behaviour he found odd, including a man wearing military boots walking around with his hands behind his back and watching people. He also saw a group of people huddled in a tent, strategizing. He was not sure who they were and did not want to strategize with them.

According to Mr. Maisonville, most protesters were peaceful and were not breaking any laws. He said that some people were drinking, and while he asked them to stop, they did not do so.

Protest in Ottawa

Mr. Maisonville did not attend the protest in Ottawa, but he knows some people who did. He said that there was an effort to warn people in Ottawa that protesters in Windsor had experienced police brutality, and that it could happen there as well. However, he explained that this message was blocked by the media and the Facebook algorithm. He said that users who posted about this issue would be shadow banned, and that if warnings were sent via private message, the message would not open. He confirmed that by “warn,” he did not mean coordinate or strategize.